

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 00502 121127Z
ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 SP-02 SS-15 PM-04
L-03 FEA-01 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05
EB-07 NRC-05 DODE-00 ERDA-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 INRE-00 /101 W
-----121136Z 016341 /13

O R 121115Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9372
INFO AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 00502

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR ENRG JA SP FR UK EC
SUBJECT: TRANSFER OF IRRADIATED FUEL ELEMENTS FOR
REPROCESSING

REF: (A) STATE 530; (B) 76 STATE 314124; /C) 76 LONDON
L9605

1. EMBASSY PROVIDED WILMSHURST OF FCO COPIES OF REVISED
ERDA /ETTERS TO SPAAK CONCERNING JAPANESE AND SPANISH
REACTORS (REFTEL A). HE SAID HMG WELCOMED THE LETTERS
BUT HE THOUGHT THE COMMISSION MIGHT SEEK SOME CHANGE IN
WORDING. HE SAID HE HAD HEARD FROM BRUSSELS THAT THE
COMMISSION WAS OBJECTING, AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, TO THE
LANGUAGE IN PARAGRAPH THREE WHICH REQUIRED PRIOR US
APPROVAL TO ANY USE OR TRANSFER WITHIN EURATOM TERRITORY
OF RECOVERED SPECIAL MATERIAL.

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PAGE 02 LONDON 00502 121127Z

2. WILMSHURST VOLUNTEERED THAT HE HAD HEARD INFOR-
MALLY THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE THAT BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS
LIMITED (BNFL) WAS CONSIDERING WHETHER OR NOT IT WANTED
TO DO BUSINESS WITH ANY STRINGS ATTACHED. BNFL FOUND
SMALL BATCHES OF MATERIAL INTERESTING BUT NOT ESPECIALLY
PROFITABLE, ESPECIALLY IF IT WERE TO BE AGREED THAT
THERE WAS A BETTER METHOD OF HANDLING THE MATERIAL

BEFORE BNFL ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED THE REPROCESSING. HE SAID THE JAPANESE MATERIAL SHOULD ARRIVE WITHIN TWO TO THREE MONTHS BUT IT MIGHT TAKE UP TO A YEAR BEFORE IT WAS ACTUALLY REPROCESSED. HE NOTED THAT WHILE JAPANESE MAGNOX MATERIAL MIGHT TAKE LESS TIME, THE SPANISH OXIDE MATERIAL COULD TAKE EVEN LONGER THAN A YEAR. BNFL'S HEAD END PLANT WILL START UP ONLY BY THE END OF 1977 OR EARLY 1978. WILMSHURST CONCLUDED THAT WHILE THE UK COULD VIEW A DELAY WITH EQUANIMITY, THE BASIC PROBLEM IS THE DESIRE OF THE JAPANESE AND SPANIARDS TO GET RID OF THE MATERIAL QUICKLY, THE JAPANESE BECAUSE IT IS REQUIRED BY LAW AND THE SPANISH BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO PLACE TO STORE MATERIAL AND REACTORS MIGHT HAVE TO BE SHUT DOWN.

3. WILMSHURST BELIEVED BNFL'S DECISION ON WHETHER TO PROCEED UNDER THE CONDITIONS STATED WOULD BE BASED PARTLY ON COMMERCIAL GROUNDS. WHILE FCO WILL SUGGEST IT GO ALONG WITH CONDITIONS OUTLINED IN THE LETTER TO SPAAK, THERE MAY BE SOME QUESTION ON ACCEPTABILITY OF LANGUAGE IN LAST PARAGRAPH RESPECTING POSSIBILITY THAT "OTHER DISPOSITION OF IRRADIATED FUEL" MAY BE AGREED ON IN LIEU OF REPROCESSING. WILMSHURST HOPES TO HAVE A REPLY ON THIS POINT BY NEXT WEEK.

4. WILMSHURST CONCLUDED THAT IN A BROADER CONTEXT CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES OVER THESE TYPES OF SHIPMENTS MIGHT WELL HINDER THE OVERRIDING NONPROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES OF THE U.S. BY CAUSING COUNTRIES SUCH AS SPAIN, BRAZIL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LONDON 00502 121127Z

AND ROMANIA, FOR EXAMPLE, TO PRESS TO OBTAIN AN INDEPENDENT REPROCESSING CAPABILITY--A CONSEQUENCE OF THE UNCERTAINTY ENGENDERED BY LINGERING DOUBTS ABOUT FUTURE CHANGES IN US POLICY. HE ACCEPTED THE ARGUMENT THAT IMPORTANT CHANGES IN US NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY POLICY HAVE BEEN COMPARATIVELY FEW AND FAR BETWEEN, BUT NOTED NONE-THELESS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT HICCUPS (SUCH AS THE SUSPENSION OF ENRICHMENT CONTRACTS IN 1974) TO AROUSE DOUBTS ON THE PART OF THOSE WITH SUBSTANTIAL COMMITMENTS IN THE PEACEFUL NUCLEAR FIELD.

ARMSTRONG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Errors: N/A
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